



"If not us, who? If not now, when?"

HONG KONG 2014

November 2, 2014

Alex Bodnar: Uh Hong Kong yeah, it's this...

What's happening in Hong Kong now uh or this past- these past few weeks reminds me of the events in Tiananmen Square. And ironically, uh I think many people in mainland China don't even know uh about the events of Tiananmen Square. Uh that's been (Yeah) erased from history (Yup) for them.

José Cruz : Yeah yeah yeah. And and it's kind of a sensitive topic to raise even with the Chinese students that have come to Japan (Mm-hmm) uh i I find, because you you don't know what to say about Hong Kong because... And and... Even now just even trying to say it with the microphone in front of me, uh it makes me kind of worried about what I'm going to say that I don't want to offend anybody. But it's obvious that information is controlled (Wh-) in that country.

Alex: Why would you offend someone?

José: Uh I I don't- I wouldn't offend them knowing that I was saying something bad. I would of- I mean, I would offend them even though I know what I'm saying is the truth, so (Mm-hmm) if they feel offended, I don't want that to happen, but I know that there's no helping that because I'm speaking the truth and you know, you're offended because the government was lying to you about what did or didn't happen according to your history. So I don't want to, you know, say to them,

"your government ran over a bunch of kids, or or killed a bunch of kids in Tiananmen Square." And they go, "My government would never do that. I've never heard about anything like that! How dare you say that!" That kind of offence? (Mm-hmm) I'm actually speaking the truth. But unfortunately, this kid, or this Chinese person has never been privy to the truth. That's what I meant about offence.

Alex: Hmm Ok well, uh it's it's pretty pretty cl- Some things are clear and some things are **grey**. Uh when we talk about the truth. Uh It's well recorded and documented. (Mm-hmm) Uh we have the pictures and the video (Mm-hmm) of uh what happened in Tiananmen Square. It's undeniable. (Absolutely undeniable) So uh, It depends how you frame it. Uh, um if you're saying, "Oh, your government was evil back then." Uh, well that's very subjective. Uh, we can de- debate that...

José: But actually pretty close to the truth, you see. No, you're quite right. I completely agree with you. So I- just to make it clear I don't want to offend anybody, (Mm-hmm) OK. But that moment of offence, it can't be helped. There are a lot of reasons why you're probably taking offence. But face up to the truth. (Mm-hmm. Yeah) Which is why I would even bring up the topic in the first place, you know? (Sure) So here I am now thinking about Hong Kong, and um with my Chinese

students sometimes I I don't know what to say, but whe- I I kind of am surprised though that uh, with some of my Japanese students-

Alex: Wait, uh when you say "your Chinese students" So are your Chinese students from Hong Kong or are they from mainland China?

José: I think most of them are from mainland China. But I I it's hard to tell, right. I mean...

Alex: You didn't tell uh, you couldn't tell whether they were speaking Cantonese or Mandarin?

José: The one particular- NO! Number 1 (Just kidding) Number 1 um Uh, no I can't, I have no capacity to do that. Uh, number 1, I I- the Chinese students that I have most of them um the topics that we talk about don't touch on this. this particular class that I'm going to have, uh doesn't have- that will talk about

Hong Kong this year will not uh, have any Chinese students in it. So uh, and it's hard to bring up, **you know**. "**So hey, what do you think about what's happening in Hong Kong?**" Do you, do you bring it up **out of the blue**? Would you do that? Would you just bring it up out of the blue with a Hong Kong student or a Chinese student?

Alex: I wouldn't want to do it as a passing comment. Uh I I'd make sure that I have time to uh talk carefully about that topic. Uh, not make make any uh rushed statements, you know. Um so whether that's part of uh the class, uh the English class. If it's a low-level English class it's hard to bring up that topic.

Word count	Time	Words/Min.
765	4:24	173.87

Pointers:

grey: Alex is referring to "grey zones" which means, "things that are hard to define." (1:54)

you know: José says "you know" in a barely audible voice. (3:45)

So hey: José is mimicking how he would sound if he was saying this sentence. (3:46)

out of the blue: means something happening very suddenly without warning. (3:50)

Discussion:

Does your country have a healthy democracy?

Have you ever participated in a demonstration?

Are you unsatisfied with your country's politics?

Do you think the students in Hong Kong did the right thing?

VOA ARTICLE: "HONG KONG PROTESTS"
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